INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE
PROGRAM FOR AFGHANS
ORIENTATION MANUAL



NOVEMBER, 1988

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

ORIENTATION MANUAL

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of these orientation materials is to give you some background on the Afghan refugee situation, some information about IRC, and some facts about what can you expect from daily life in Pakistan.

When you arrive in Peshawar, we expect you to be exhausted. It will probably take you about a week to get over the long journey and begin to adjust to your new surroundings. You will be met at the airport in Peshawar and will then be taken to the house where you will live. Your room will have already been prepared and a kit of basic household supplies and food will have been purchased for you. Dinner for the first two nights after you arrive will also be provided.

Please take the opportunity of these first few days in Peshawar to REST AND RELAX. A short while after you have arrived you will receive a verbal orientation to work and life here. If you will be working in Hangu, arrangements will be made for you to be driven down there after you have rested in Peshawar for several days and feel refreshed and ready for work.

Please feel free at any time to ask questions or seek advice. All the IRC staff in Pakistan have had the experience of adapting to "life on the Frontier" and are eager to share their stories and give you support.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan is about the same size as France. Three quarters of the country is mountain and desert, with only about 13 percent cultivable land. Altitude varies from well over 20,000 feet to under 3,000. Much agricultural production depends on snow-fed irrigation and is critically vulnerable to poor snowfall and to destruction of the irrigation channels.

There has never been a census in Afghanistan, so the actual population is not known. Estimates vary between 14 and 18 million (before the Soviet invasion). The largest ethnic group is Pushtun, a tribal people who are the same as the Pathans of the North-west Frontier Province. The Pushtuns comprise a bit less than half the population. Other ethnic groups are the Tajiks, the Hazaras, the Aimaq and the Uzbeks. There are over 20 distinct languages, but Dari (like Farsi or Persian) is generally spoken, except in the villages in the main Pushtun regions in the south and southeast where Pushto is spoken. Almost all refugees in the camps between Hangu and Thal are Pushtuns.

All Afghans share a strong devotion to Islam and a deep feeling for personal liberty and independence.

DEVELOPMENTS LEADING UP TO THE RUSSIAN INVASION AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

Until 1973 Afghanistan was a monarchy. King Zahir Shah succeeded the throne in 1933. He presided over a succession of Governments essentially drawn from his own Pushtun grouping. Government control of the country was loose and foreign policy neutral and non-aligned, although there had been a strong Soviet presence since the 1950's based on large loans and supply of arms to the Afghan armed forces. Prince Daoud (the King's cousin) was Prime Minister during the 1960's when the Pushtun irredentist claim to territory south of the Pakistan Northwest Frontier was particularly strong (with strong diplomatic support from the Soviet Union). There was an ineffective parliament, and political parties were not licensed, but especially in the last years of the monarchy those on the left were growing stronger underground although their numbers were still small.

In 1973 the King was deposed in a bloodless coup by Soviet-trained officers and Prince Daoud was installed as President, with a Government in which the numerically still small communist parties (the rival Khalq and Parcham factions) were strongly represented. As time went on, Daoud seeing and fearing the growth of Soviet influence, gradually dropped his communist ministers and his regime became very much like the King's -- but more authoritarian. In April 1978 there was another Army coup, referred to by the Afghan regime as the Saur `Revolution', organized by the same Soviet-trained officers who had led the coup of 1973. This time, however, it was not bloodless; there was heavy resistance from the Palace Guard, and Daoud and all his family were murdered. The two Marxist factions were nominally united (although feuding between still continues) as the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). A PDPA government under the Khalqi President Taraki set about a program of revolutionary reforms which, although, they looked good on paper, were drafted by city dwellers and not properly worked out in terms of the realities of rural life. They lead to an armed revolution in the traditionalist countryside and to an increasing flow of refugees into Pakistan.

The situation became steadily worse and in the Spring of 1979 there was a further coup in which Taraki was killed and succeeded by Hafizullah Amin, who instituted a policy of severe repression amounting to a reign of terror which, however, failed to suppress the Resistance. In fact the Resistance spread rapidly and gained in strength and it became evident that in a short period of time they could overthrow the PDPA Amin Government and replace it with some kind of Islamic republic -- not an attractive prospect for the Russians.

At the end of December 1979, a well-planned and massive intervention by the Soviet Army led to the installation of a

puppet government under Babrak Karmal, a Parcham leader whom Hafizullah Amin had previously sent off to the Afghan Embassy in Prague. Amin was also murdered.

Around the middle of 1986 a change took place in the government and Najibullah (often called "Najib") replaced Babrak Karmal as the head of the government. Previously, "Najib" was in charge of the Khad, the Afghan secret police.

One of the most significant events in the past decade has been the signing of the Geneva Accords. The Geneva Accords were signed on April 15, 1988 between the Government of Pakistan and the Government of Afghanistan, with guarantees signed by the United States and the USSR. It is hoped that the Accords will bring about a withdrawal of all Russian forces from Afghanistan by February 15, 1989. This may also provide an opportunity for the refugees to return, but this is not a certainty. Refugees say they will return if the present government is changed to an Islamic government, if the area is secure and free from mines, if there are no Soviet troops and if aid will be available to assist them.

AFGHAN REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN

Small numbers of political dissidents were forced to flee Afghanistan as early as 1973, but the large influx of refugees actually began after the Taraki coup of 1978 when over 100,000 refugees sought asylum in Pakistan. When, in September 1979, Taraki's Government was overthrown, the number of refugees almost doubled. The situation changed dramatically with the Russian intervention in December 1979 which installed the regime of Babrak Karmal. Within a few days of the invasion the refugee figure soared to about 400,000. By mid-1980 one million refugees were in Pakistan and by the end of June 1984 this figure had grown to three million.

It was not until January of 1980 that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Program (WFP) came in with emergency relief assistance programs. Until that time the Government of Pakistan (GOP) had basically handled the situation alone. Gradually, other voluntary agencies (such as IRC) began to arrive and now there are approximately 60 organizations (foreign, Afghan and Pakistani) providing some kind of service to the refugees. The GOP, with UNHCR support is still the implementing agency for the majority of the program, perhaps about 70 percent, with UNHCR and the voluntary agencies taking care of the balance. Core services consist of food, fuel and shelter, basic medical care, sanitation and education. In addition, other kinds of programs, such as vocational training and income generation schemes, have started.

When refugees first began coming to Pakistan, many of them stayed in Peshawar. Among these early arrivals were quite a number of educated people for whom Peshawar offered a better opportunity. Since then, however, the majority of refugees have come from a rural background and have settled in some 350 "Refugee Tented Villages" scattered in the 24 border districts and Agencies of the N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan and the Mianwali District of the Punjab.

It is the States and Frontier Regions Division of the Ministry of the Interior, or SAFRON, which is the Federal Government agency responsible for refugee programs in Pakistan. Any new program for the refugees must first be approved by SAFRON before it can be implemented. The Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees is the person responsible for coordination of services (at the Islamabad level) and at the local level are the Provincial Commissioners for Refugees. Working under the Provincial Commissioner are the District Administrator, then the Area Administrator and, finally, the Camp Administrator. Within the Commissioner's office are a number of Additional Commissioners and the various heads of the program areas, such as the Project Director Health for medical programs and the Commissioner of the Education Cell for education programs. IRC works with these different agencies of the Commissionerate in coordinating activities.

One effect of the signing of the Geneva Accords has been the establishment of the UN Coordinator's Office for Humanitarian Relief for Afghanistan. The Coordinator, whose position is that of Under-Secretary to the United Nations, is Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan. One function of his office is to involve other UN agencies interested in relief efforts for Afghanistan.

Similarly, the voluntary agencies have responded by creating ACBAR -- Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief. This is an attempt on the part of voluntary agencies to collectively address issues concerning the refugees while they remain in Pakistan, and to coordinate assistance to refugees as they return to Afghanistan. ACBAR is a well established organization with some 60 member agencies. Eight sub-committees of ACBAR are also operational: Medical, Education, Agriculture, Construction, Logistics and Mine Clearance, Refugees and Repatriation, Human Resources and Library Services. Through the sub-committees agencies are trying to focus upon problems attendant to particular areas.

HISTORY OF IRC IN THE REFUGEE PROGRAM

Representatives of IRC came to Pakistan in early 1980 to survey the situation and see how IRC could be of assistance. Based upon this visit, it was decided that IRC would become involved and

discussions then began with the various Government officials to work out where we could be most helpful.

The program started in July, 1980 with two medical teams serving the refugee camps in the Kohat District and the areas between Hangu and Thal. In 1981 a third team was added. By mid-1988 there were 10 medical teams operating in eleven camps. Today IRC has numerous programs in education, income generation and other health related areas. It is one of the largest overseas refugee programs in the history of IRC, employing as of 1988, 1,000 people serving over 200,000 refugees in Pakistan. With the prospect of refugees returning, IRC is increasing training projects and making plans in order to assist Afghans as they return. For a further description of IRC's programs in Pakistan. see, International Rescue Committee -- Program for Afghans, included in this orientation package.

AFGHAN POLITICS IN PESHAWAR

There is a lot of talk about Afghan politics and how they impact upon the refugee situation and the war. What follows is a brief outline of the various parties involved. The parties and their constituents are constantly changing and so this outline is only provided to help you understand a little of what is occurring.

The Afghan political parties in Peshawar can basically be broken into two groups; the Islamic nationalists, consisting of three parties and the fundamentalists of which there are four parties.

Islamic Nationalists

Mahaz-e-Milli-e-Afghanistan

Sayed Ahmad Gailani, a spiritual leader, is the head of this organization. He is a graduate of Kabul University in Islamic Law.

Gailani migrated to NWFP in 1978, after the Saur Revolution, and founded a separate Afghan refugee group. The party manifesto laid down the role of a future Islamic Government and Islamic Constitution of Afghanistan with the approval of an elected Jirga (parliament) and opposed dictatorship of any religious party, family or group which might acquire power without holding general elections. The organization favors obtaining financial help from Islamic as well as Western countries. Gailani has close ties with ex-King Zahir Shah and favors the role of the royal family in their struggle against the Russians.

Jubha-e-Nijat-e-Milli
(Afghan National Liberation Front)

Professor Sibghatullah Mujaddedi, also a scholar of Islamic Law, is the Chairman of this party.

He was imprisoned for four years during Zahir Shah's regime on charges of trying to plan a coup against the regime. He later organized a movement to press upon the King his resentment against the Russian influence in Afghanistan. He also warned Daoud of the consequences of assigning a decisive role to the Communists in his government.

He came to Pakistan in 1978 and established his party. They have adopted a moderate course to centralize efforts to accelerate Jihad, force Russia to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan and to have a Representative Government elected through general elections. Their aim is to establish a peaceful society based on Islamic brotherhood and social justice. They are not opposed to the role of ex-King Zahir Shah and his family in the Liberation struggle of Afghanistan and are not against obtaining financial help from the Western powers to accelerate their struggle.

Harkat-e-Inquilab-e-Islami

Maulvi Muhammad Nabi Muhammadi, a religious scholar, is the leader of this party. When the Khalq party started publication of its posters, he started a campaign against this party and toured various parts of the country to acquaint people with the communists designs and organized groups to register protest against the activities of communist groups and the Russian influence. He also urged ex-King Zahir Shah to counter communist ideology and Russian infiltration in Afghanistan.

He migrated to Pakistan after the April 1978 coup and invited religious scholars, students, Afghan army officers and intellectuals to organize a party under the name Harkat-e-Inquilab-e-Islami in Quetta. Later Engineer Gulbadin and Younis Khalis invited him to Peshawar and got him elected as the President of their alliance, but the alliance disintegrated after six months and its constituent parties separated.

This party is moderate and religious and nationalistic in character. It favors joining hands with all Islamic forces to free their homeland from the Russian occupation. Their party manifesto contemplates formation of a broad-based Islamic alliance, friendly relations with the Islamic World, introduction of an interest-free banking system and establishment of a true Islamic society.

Fundamentalists

Hizb-e-Islami Afghanistan

Engineer Gulbadin Hikmatyar is the leader of this party. The party was actually founded by him together with Younis Khalis and Professor Rabbani in 1978, but later on differences arose between them and so Gulbadin organized a separate party under the same name.

Gulbadin was a student of engineering at Kabul University where he was active in student politics. He was opposed to the Khalq and Parcham parties and the pervading Russian influence in Afghanistan during ex-King Zahir Shah's regime. He founded an organization whose aim was to propagate Islamic ideology among students and teachers and opposition to the communists and the Russian influence. During Daoud's regime Gulbadin was forced underground and then came to Pakistan in 1974 and in 1978, after the April coup, he organized Hizb-e-Islami.

The party manifesto is very fundamentalist saying that the Quran and Sunnah are the sole sources of the law and advocates obligatory prayer and fasting and proper punishment for infidels. It opposes co-education and advocates compulsory military training in all educational institutions. It opposes both Eastern and Western colonialism and favors friendly relations with the Muslim world. Gulbadin is inspired by Imam Khomeni and believes in a Khomeni type of Islamic revolution in Afghanistan.

Gulbadin has strong opinions and is forceful in implementing them. He is opposed to any role of the royal family in the struggle against the Russians.

Hizb-e-Islami

This is the other Hizb-e-Islami and is headed by Younis Khalis who had helped set up Gulbadin's party but later split off due to differences between them.

Khalis is an Islamic scholar who was also very active with Gulbadin in student politics at Kabul University.

This is a fundamentalist Islamic group which professes the idea that the best solution to the Afghan crisis is military and not political and favors approaching Muslim countries for financial assistance, arms and ammunition. The party manifesto favors Islamic law and an elected representative government through general elections. It discourages co-education and advocates segregation of male and female workers. It rejects compulsory military service and, instead, wants to attract people by offering handsome salaries.

Jamiat-e-Islami Afghanistan

This party is run by Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani who had also helped set up Gulbadin's Hizb-e-Islami, but later left due to differences between them and organized his own group.

Professor Rabbani is also a scholar of Islamic Law and Theology and was also active in University politics in Kabul. He hid out in the tribal areas after 1974 when Daoud ordered his arrest and then came to Pakistan in 1978.

He is an Islamic fundamentalist who believes is the establishment of Islamic rule in Afghanistan according to the true tenets of Islam. He is inspired by the Iranian revolution and is in contact with Iranian diplomats in Peshawar. Rabbani is more liberal than Gulbadin in relation to implementation of Islamic law and several clashes have occurred between them.

Ittehad-e-Islami

Professor Abdur Rasool Saiyaf is the leader of this party. He is also a scholar of Islamic Law and Theology and active in politics. He was imprisoned for about five years during Daoud's regime and eventually came to Pakistan in 1979.

He was elected as President of Ittehad-e-Islami which at that time was an alliance of various groups and parties, but as later on the constituted parties separated, he formed his own group and retained the same name.

The Seven Party Alliance

All of the parties above make up the Seven Party Alliance which rotates its spokesman every three months. In many ways it is a true alliance. Some of the military activities of these various groups are coordinated and there are education and health committees that meet on a regular basis. On the other hand these parties have differences in regards to politics and religion which can sometimes result in conflict.

One sign of "alliance" has been the formation of an Interim Government by the Seven Party Alliance. It is currently headed by Mr. Ahmed Shah. Within the Interim Government a number of ministries have also been established.

LIFE ON THE FRONTIER

Peshawar is a city of almost 1,000,000 people -- the population has increased dramatically over the past eight years due to the influx of Afghan refugees. It has been estimated that about 300,000 Afghans are living in Peshawar, most likely more.

There are two major downtown areas in Peshawar, the Cantonment/Saddar Bazaar area and the Old City. Just about anything one needs can be purchased in either of these two places.

Most foreigners live in University Town which takes its name from the Peshawar University which is close by. Wealthier Pakistanis also live in University Town as well as a number of Afghans. Most houses are quite spacious (by Western standards) and have large gardens. It is usually quiet and safe and most foreigners are happy to live in University Town.

Housing

IRC provides shared housing in the field and Peshawar. Linens and towels, as well as basic kitchen utensils and dishes are also provided. Houses have hot water and electricity, fans (only the Peshawar houses are air conditioned) in the summer and heating in the winter. All houses are completely furnished and are very comfortable. In almost all cases a single employee or married couple are given their own room within houses in Hangu or Peshawar.

IRC provides cleaning service to both Peshawar and Hangu houses and in Hangu cooks are also provided. If you want to hire a cook in Peshawar, you will be responsible for his salary as well as for the salaries of any other household staff you might wish to take on, such as a dhobi, which is the word for the person who washes clothing. If you wish to hire additional servants, IRC staff can assist you in locating them. All houses have 24 hour guards. These people are called chowkidars. For the security of your belongings, we advise that you bring some padlocks with you. Locks are available here, but are not as reliable as those brought from overseas. We also have a safe in the Main Office where some small items and money can be stored.

Staff houses rented in Peshawar up to this time all have telephones. We cannot absolutely guarantee that phones will be available in future rentals; however, we always endeavour to find houses with telephones.

We also provide several VCR's which are rotated to the various houses in Peshawar and can be reserved in advance. There are

also a number of VCR's in Hangu. There is quite a good selection of video cassettes in Peshawar.

Dress

The local dress, worn by both men and women, is called a shalwar kameez: It consists of a pair of very loose drawstring trousers (the shalwar) with a loose fitting shirt or dress worn over the top (the kameez). It is a very comfortable garment, especially in summer. All expatriate women who work for IRC in the field must wear a shalwar kameez, for men it is optional. In addition to the shalwar kameez, it is also advisable for expatriate women working in the field to wear a chador, or shawl, which covers the head. Fabrics and dressmakers are easily found both in Peshawar and in Hangu. It will take a week or so to put together a basic wardrobe of shalwar kameez, so we advise that women bring with them some trousers and long shirts (covering the backside) to wear in the meantime. In Peshawar at most Western gatherings, and certainly in one's own home, any kind of western dress is acceptable. However, one is advised to dress more discreetly when venturing out into the local bazaars, especially the Old City. Legs and shoulders should be covered on these occasions.

There are lots of parties and social gatherings in Peshawar and so it is a good idea to bring some "dress-up" clothing for the more the formal or festive affairs.

Shopping and What To Bring

As was mentioned earlier, most items are available here in the local bazaars. There are some things which are difficult or impossible to find:

Cheese (A local product, "Green's" cheese as well as Kraft processed cheese are available -- Cheddar cheese can sometimes be found in Islamabad.)

Coffee beans or grounds (can be found in Islamabad)

Coffee Pots

Tampax

Certain kitchen utensils such as measuring cups and spoons and pie plates (although you can sometimes have these made)

American brand-name cosmetics

Chocolate

Insect repellant

100 percent cotton fabric (if you do not like to wear cotton/polyester blends -- cotton is not easy to find)

So, if you use or can't live without these things, bring a supply with you.

Shopping in the local bazaars can be a real treat. For the most part shopkeepers are friendly and helpful and many speak English. It pays off to develop relationships with certain merchants around town so as to get a fair deal and so that if you ever do need a place to get away from the crowd, these people will be happy to provide you with a safe haven.

There is a wide variety of both Pakistani and Afghan handicrafts available. Carpets, weavings, embroideries, copper and brass ware, onyx, jewelry (especially lapis lazuli), leather goods and wooden furniture are some of the things you can have fun buying. You must bargain -- it is an important social activity and, of course, can save you some money as well.
The Saddar bazaar also has several decent book stores where the International Herald Tribune can be purchased daily, as well as Newsweek, Time and many local English newspapers.

Once again, when shopping in the bazaars, it is important for ladies to dress discreetly and to go about their business purposefully.

Food and Drink

The Peshawar Valley is very fertile, so wonderful fruits vegetables, nuts and pulses are available all year round. The fruits and vegetables are, however, very seasonal. In the summer, for example, the only vegetables in the local shops are eggplant, varieties of squash, tomatoes, onions, okra (a very popular vegetable) and sometimes spinach. It is a good idea to stockpile and freeze such things as carrots, peas and green beans when they are available in the winter. It is also possible to grow your own vegetables and herbs so you might want to bring some seeds with you.

Meats (except pork) and poultry are available, although you will find the chickens a bit scrawny (they taste fine though). Seafood is also available, but usually only in the winter.

What cannot be found in Peshawar can usually be obtained in Islamabad; things like frozen fish and meat, good-sized chickens and out of season vegetables, so every now and then it is worth a trip down to stock up.

All kinds of flour (whole wheat [called atta], white, rice, corn) are available, local spices abound and such things as milk, eggs and sugar are easily found.

The local cuisine is quite tasty and spicy but can often be very oily and salty. Pathans, particularly, eat a great deal of meat and at a local function, you may be hard-pressed to find a vegetable (other than onions and tomatoes) on the table. Naan, a type of flat bread which looks like a big tortilla or pancake, is a staple with every meal. It is very good and is usually made with whole wheat or atta flour.

Sale and consumption of alcohol is illegal here, but there are certain dispensations for non-Muslim foreigners:

1. The Peshawar Club:

   By joining the Peshawar Club and obtaining a special license through the Club, you can purchase locally produced beer and spirits there.

2. The American Club:

   If you join the American Club, you can have a drink (imported beer, wine and spirits) in the bar or restaurant there. Hamburgers, Pizza and Apple pie are also served.

All kinds of soda pop (including Coca Cola and Sprite) are available.

It is recommended that drinking water be boiled in Peshawar and Hangu and that vegetables and fruit be soaked (either with a few drops of iodine or some sterilizing solution -- both are available here).

Weather

The weather in Peshawar can be quite extreme. The summer, which lasts from about May to September (although it can begin to heat up in March) is very hot with temperatures staying around 100 F. to 105 F. for long periods of time. Towards the end of the summer the weather also becomes very humid. The winters (November to February) are not as extreme, but it does get cold enough for early morning frosts. Therefore, it is necessary to bring light, cool clothing as well as some sweaters and a warm jacket.

Banking

Both U.S. dollar and rupee accounts can be opened here at Grindlay's Bank.

As in most developing countries it is difficult to obtain hard currencies, but with a U.S. dollar account at Grindlay's, you can obtain traveller's checks when leaving the country for a vacation or on your return home. Each month your paycheck will be deposited for you into your Pakistan bank account.

We suggest that upon leaving the U.S. you change about $100. for Pakistani rupees. This can be done at the airport. It will make it easier when arriving. We also suggest that you keep an American checking account, especially if you have bills to pay. Talk to IRC New York about depositing part of your pay check into your American account.

If you are shipping anything or lose your luggage, please fill out a Customs Form at the airport Customs Desk upon arrival.

The exchange rate for Pakistani rupees has averaged about 17 Rs. to the dollar for the past two years.

Health and Immunizations

The U.S. Embassy list of recommended immunizations is attached. It is up to each individual to decide what is best for him/her with regard to immunizations.

Local medical care is rather sketchy. While local physicians can be excellent, many having been trained abroad, the nursing care leaves a great deal to be desired. For this reason, the U.S. Embassy refers any seriously ill person or patient needing hospitalization to either the Aga Khan Hospital in Karachi, or to Frankfurt or Bangkok.

Make every effort to be in good health upon arrival and try to stay that way by being careful about what you eat and drink and getting enough rest.

IRC will try to provide you with follow-up immunizations if necessary. We also advise that if you choose to take a malaria prophylactic you do so two weeks before departure for Pakistan. Malaria prophylaxis is strongly recommended. See the IRC Vaccination Protocol for Overseas Personnel, attached.

Mail and Telephone

Both the mail and phone service is fairly reliable in Pakistan. Most letters to the west take anywhere from two to three weeks, but they make it. Your mail is handled through the Main Office. In-coming mail is distributed as it arrives. You can have the office post your outgoing letters in which case you will receive a monthly bill for postage.

As was mentioned previously, staff houses in Peshawar have telephones. Some phones in Pakistan have direct dial to the States, on the others a phone call has to be booked, but this is a simple procedure. Forms are provided by the office for logging overseas calls. The Main Office also has a telex and a fax machine through which messages can be sent on your behalf.

The Peshawar Social Scene

It is not known exactly how many expatriates live in Peshawar. The U.S. Consulate estimates that there are over 500, and they are of a wide variety of nationalities. There is not a great deal here in the way of entertainment, so people do what they can to make the most of the situation.

There is quite a bit of entertaining done in private homes -- parties, dinners, etc., so chances are that you will have an opportunity to meet people in this way.
The American Club in University Town is another social center. It costs an initial US$ 100.00 to join (refundable) and $7.50 per month thereafter. The American Club has a restaurant, a bar, tennis court, and a VCR as well as video cassettes which can be viewed at the Club. The Club also hosts a number of parties and functions throughout the year. Membership is limited and there is now a waiting list to join. IRC will assist you in obtaining membership if you wish to join.

While the Peshawar Club in the Cantonment area is not a social center for expatriates, it does have a restaurant, tennis and squash courts.

The Pearl Continental Hotel has a swimming pool and for a small fee one can join the Pearl Continental Pool for the summer months. Swimming at this pool is co-ed. The hotel has a restaurant and the other usual facilities.

There are all kinds of opportunities for local travel and some really beautiful places to see -- visits to these places can be easily arranged. Because it can be rather limiting socially, it is not a bad idea to get out of Peshawar from time to time.

Exercise

Opportunities for outdoor exercise in Peshawar and Hangu are quite limited, especially for women. There are, however, some activities in which women can be involved without cultural difficulty. There is a tennis court at the American Club, which is accessible to both men and women. It is also quite acceptable for women to swim at the Pearl Continental Pool. Hiking in the surrounding countryside (not in tribal agencies) is also something women can do if properly attired. Horse-riding and golf are also activities in which women can participate. The Peshawar Golf Club is an especially pleasant place -- even if one goes just for a walk.

For aerobics enthusiasts there is an indoor class held four times a week at the American Center auditorium. This class is coeducational.

Security

The security situation in Peshawar can sometimes be extremely tense, at other times it can feel safe. Since 1986 there has been a steady increase in bombings in the Saddar bazaar and the Old City. There have been bombs that have killed as many as 30 people. Many of the Afghans and Pakistanis that live here believe that these bombs are planted by the Khad (Afghan Secret Police) for the purpose of destabilizing Pakistan. Usually, after these bombs explode they are followed by demonstrations against the Pakistan government. The U.S. Consulate then informs us that we should not go to certain areas of the city. On the average there is about one bomb a week.

There is a risk in being here, but IRC has taken every precaution to safeguard the lives of its employees. Around the clock guards are stationed at our houses and offices. Drivers are provided for trips to the bazaar. Additionally, all IRC employees are required to abide by certain rules to ensure their own safety.

1. Employees are not allowed to leave an IRC vehicle unattended at the bazaar. (Magnetic bombs are sometimes placed under cars.) This usually means having a driver stay with the car.

2. Employees are requested to vary their routes to work in Peshawar.

3. Employees are not allowed to travel by car between cities on the roads at night.

4. IRC International employees are not allowed to drive between cities; IRC drivers are provided.

These are just some of the precautions. See the special section on Security included with this package.

At present we see no prospects of this situation changing.

Travel

Peshawar has an airport from which you can fly to many cities in Pakistan, including Islamabad and Karachi where connections can be made to cities around the world. When you come to Peshawar, you will come either via Islamabad or Karachi. If you get held up in Islamabad, take a taxi from the airport to the Holiday Inn (the taxis cost between 50 --100 rupees) or if that is full, the Islamabad Hotel or the Pearl Continental. IRC/Pakistan will reimburse you for the cost of the taxi and the hotel. Similarly in Karachi, go to the Sheraton Hotel. Please let us know ahead of time through our New York office if you need to stay over in Karachi or Islamabad. We will then make a reservation for you at a discount to us. Once again keep all receipts for travel expenses and you will be reimbursed upon arrival in Peshawar. Tickets from Karachi or Islamabad to Peshawar cannot always be purchased overseas (in the United States for example), but they can be bought locally. If you have excess baggage (i.e., over 20 kgs, which is the normal allowance for economy class passengers), you can expect to be charged for this out of Karachi or Islamabad. Out of Karachi the fee is Rs 21.20 per kg. (about $1.20) and from Islamabad it is Rs 2.40 per kg (about 13 US cents). Do not pay more than these amounts even though you may be asked to do so. These are the regulation charges.

Here are some useful telephone numbers:
(NB: The work week is Sunday -- Thursday, weekends are Friday and Saturday)

IRC Office in Peshawar	41274/41845
Tom Yates (Director, home)	42203
Steve Segal (Deputy Director,home)	42572
Mark Luce (Admin. Coordinator, home)	42361
Holiday Inn Islamabad	826121
Islamabad Hotel	827311
Pearl Continental Rawalpindi	66011
Sheraton Karachi	521021

